

SESSION 5: Crossing Cultures Changes Us

Session: This session offers an extended reflection on what participants are noticing about changes in themselves and introduces ways to assess the readiness for partnership in a group.

OUTLINE OF SCHEDULE:

05 min: Gathering Prayer

10 min: Homework Processing

20 min: Presentation and Conversation: Life Is Startling and Disappointing

15 min: Presentation and Reflection: Your New Identity and Four Assumptions

20 min: Presentation: The Bennett Scale

15 min: Analysis

05 min: Assignment and Closing Prayer

COPIES THAT NEED TO BE MADE:

1 copy per participant:

Gathering Prayer (1 pg)

Assumptions of the Developmental Model Of Intercultural Sensitivity (1 pg)

Bennett Scale (1 pg)

Intercultural Conflict Styles (1 pg)

Who Are These People? (1 pg)

Assignment and Closing Prayer (1 pg)

“On Being Viewed as Strange” (1 pg—duplex on back of Assignment)

INSTRUCTOR'S CONTENT

05 min: Gathering Prayer:

Reflection by Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman

LEADER: The concern which I lay bare before God today is my need to be better:

I want to be better than I am in my most ordinary day-by-day contacts:

ALL: With my friends—

With my family—

With my casual contacts—

With my business relations—

With my associates in work and play.

LEADER: I will read these slowly and pause after each phrase, take time to reflect on whether there are things you want to let go of in relation to each category. After each pair I will invite you to make the response with, "We pray..."

I want to be better than I am in the responsibilities that are mine:

I am conscious of many petty resentments. (pause)

I am conscious of increasing hostility toward certain people. (pause)

We pray:

ALL: I want to be better than I am.

LEADER:

I am conscious of the effort to be pleasing for effect, not because it is a genuine feeling on my part. (pause)

I am conscious of a tendency to shift to other shoulders burdens that are clearly my own. (pause)

We pray:

ALL: I want to be better than I am.

LEADER:

I want to be better in the quality of my religious experience. (pause)

I want to develop an honest and clear prayer life. (pause)

ALL: I want to be better than I am.

LEADER:

I want to develop a sensitiveness to the will of God in my own life. (pause)

I want to develop a charitableness toward my fellows that is greater even than my most exaggerated pretensions. (pause)

ALL: I want to be better than I am.

I lay bare this need and this desire before God in the quietness of this moment.

Prayer by Rev. Frank O. Holmes

LEADER: Life does not call us merely to do over and over again what we have already done;

ALL: nor does it call us to act out, as puppets, parts already assigned to us.

LEADER: No. In the midst of a situation which is itself ever changing,

ALL: we are free to bring into realization new relationships of understanding and good-will, and new acts of courage.

10 min: Homework Processing

Which options did you do? What did you learn from the exercise you chose to complete?

20 min: Presentation and Conversation: Life Is Startling and Disappointing

(8 min) It is not unusual for people to describe intercultural encounters as dangerous. Sometimes this rises from fear or honest dismay. Sometimes it rises from an arrogant righteousness. And sometimes it rises from a dim awareness that I might have to change if I learn something new. I would like to take a few minutes at the beginning of this session for some reflection on two ways to categorize our experiences so that we might understand them as the door of "optimal anxiety."

You may remember that in the first session of this module, sociologist, Dr. William Gudykunst gave us the term, “optimal anxiety.” He defined optimal anxiety in this way: We think that a stranger’s behavior is predictable but we realize we may not be able to describe it accurately. In other words, we know there is some system to the stranger’s choices, actions, and words even though we don’t know everything about that system. This connects to the third phase of the natural competence cycle in intercultural communication that Dr. Stella Ting-Toomey described in our last session. In that phase we know something of the other system but not everything—and she also offered us skills to expose that system and capitalize on our anxiety so that it truly is optimal. The skills Ting-Toomey offered were rooted in mindfulness. Let’s take a few minutes to be mindful and introspective together.

First, I would ask you to reflect on the idea that life is startling. I am not talking about events that trigger a “startle response” or the great tragedies of life. Those require more specific responses outside the scope of this course. Nevertheless, we can experience being startled as “Big” in a metaphorical sense: Life is startling because connections are everywhere. Interfaith dialogue is almost as if you get to play the game of ‘six degrees’ with all of life not just Kevin Bacon!

Consider this: In one week in October 2013 (10th-17th), one of the original US Astronauts, Scott Carpenter, died and David Lordkipanidze discovered a Georgian skull of *homo erectus* that was 1.8 million years old. On the face of it, these are not related. But the factual proximity of those two events offers us a metaphorical arc: Every week, in the course of a week, some stories seem too fantastic to touch us and yet we learn about ourselves from everything from remains buried in the earth to stars beyond our reach.

The Dalai Lama is famous for teaching that the basic truths of Buddhism and Christianity are both powerful and radically different. I’d say they are as far apart as buried remains and the stars. And yet they are related in this way: They offer humanity truths that organize and make sense of our lives. You have undertaken an explorer’s work and your attitude of openness makes it possible that you can uncover connections from ‘in here’, buried in the earth, to ‘out there’, spinning among the stars.

There is another way that life is startling; it is in little “unexpectancies.” So many times, people, places, and resources we think we know well reveal new things. Perhaps they’re things we overlooked before or new information shines a new light on what seemed an insignificant detail or we grow into a deeper meaning because our view of life has broadened. Every now and then, we even have to admit that what we held as true wasn’t complete. “Unexpectancies” are openings to re-evaluate and reconfigure our lives quietly, without duress. A silly example: One day I was packing picnic lunch to take to a friend’s. I had grilled some fish the evening before and bought some bread I knew she liked. I also knew she liked her fish with tartar sauce so I prepared the sandwich that way. Well it turned out she only likes tartar sauce on hot fish; when eating cold fish, she prefers mayo! *Nothing* about this was earth-shattering; our friendship certainly didn’t suffer because of it! But it was a little unexpectancy that reminded me that human beings are marvelously complex and we should never take each other for granted.

(5 min) Take a moment to reflect on how you have been startled by life in the last week. Reflect also on what has startled to you as you have engaged in theological reflection in groups. What new connections have you noticed? What would have seemed distant before but now seems closer? What very familiar thing revealed something new to you? Or what insight took on a new dimension? *After reflecting for a moment, work in groups of three for 3-4 minutes of conversation about your understandings.*

Bring the group back together: When we engage people of other Traditions in conversation, we can expect to be startled even if only mildly. And we can expect our conversation partners to be equally startled by us. It is important to stay in touch with our own emotional experience of unexpectancies and connection as well as develop the skills on which we have been focusing.

(3 min) Now I would like to reflect on the idea that life is disappointing. Again I am not talking about tragedies or systemic oppressions needing systematic work. I want to start with the little hopes that are

dashed regularly: The new recipe wasn't what we expected; the expensive shoes didn't hold up well; the toaster settings are no longer reliable. These are not earth-shattering concerns but if we stack enough of them up together, they can make or break a day. These kinds of little disappointments are invitations to explore our attachments and day-to-day beliefs. They often uncover how we *really* feel about things!

There are other ways in which life is disappointing. It happens when our false impressions and stereotypes are unmasked. For example, we tend to think of ourselves as enlightened; we surely wouldn't have enrolled in a program like this if we thought of our neighbors as diabolical! But sometimes we don't take enough time to learn about their cultures or Traditions. Sometimes we assume we know more than we do. Then we act or speak judgmentally towards them or authoritatively about them.

Or again we don't generally let our esteem for our friends or colleagues elevate them to god-status but sometimes we hold them to unrealistic standards. When they let us down, we are surprised to discover the problem was at least as much in our faulty expectations and small idolizations as in their actions.

These are a little bit more difficult to handle because these disappointments ultimately expose serious things (false impressions and stereotypes, faulty expectations and small idolizations) that we need to address personally. It's not like we can blow off steam about the stupid toaster, go buy a new one, and be done with it. Instead we have to reset our hearts or adjust an attitude or clarify our approach to a relationship.

(4 min) Even in our simple role-plays, you have experienced disappointment. Perhaps you didn't finish an assigned task or felt inadequate as you facilitated. Perhaps you realized you weren't really comfortable with the role someone was playing—and up to that moment, you had been sure you were truly open to any spirituality or theology. Perhaps you were surprised by what you didn't know about a Tradition or a process. Take a moment to reflect on the process you've been practicing for the last two weeks. What kind of disappointments have you experienced? *Return to your groups of three and spend 2-3 minutes discussing what you feel you need to personally address in these last couple of weeks.*

15 min: Presentation and Reflection: Your New Identity & Four Assumptions

(8 min) I have stressed all along that this module isn't an academic exercise; you aren't simply comparing your Tradition's ideas with another Tradition's ideas. As Ambassadors you are representing a living community and connecting to other living communities. A living community is dynamic; its identity is not static. Naturally this means culture is also dynamic. Too often we think of culture as an unchanging collection of beliefs and norms for behavior, but it is really a portrayal of a dynamic organism. Because of this, this module has also used many insights and tools from intercultural communication specialists along with interfaith experts.

Interfaith experts teach us about virtues and theological language, the issues associated with crossing boundaries between Traditions, and how to assess appropriate levels for interaction. For example, can a volunteer initiate a conversation about this theological issue or is it something that should be handled between professional leaders? Intercultural communicators offer us more "generic" skills in that they stress that competence is rarely particular to *a* culture. Intercultural work crosses boundaries by getting firsthand knowledge of *this* community's customs and meanings through your dialogue partners not only through a textbook. It allows you to see and hear difference up close and personal.

Difference has frequently been treated as a problem. Dr. Milton J. Bennett has spent his life exploring intercultural communication and has formulated the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*. Bennett observes that previously there were five prevalent models for "solving" difference. *Ask participants to offer examples of each of these as you describe them.*

The models were:

- 1) Assimilationist model: Prepare the outsider to join us
- 2) Legal model: Develop mandated baselines that everyone must meet to belong fully
- 3) Diversity Lite model: Highlight the importance and value of diversity—but don't explore or do it
- 4) Valuing Diversity model: Focus on Culture and become more inclusive
- 5) Counters "isms" model (e.g. racism, classism): This piecemeal method often becomes paralyzing because it develops hypersensitivity and disorientation by trying to police concerns isolated from one another

We have spent a lot of time and energy pursuing religious literacy so you know I would never suggest that you should neglect theological preparation or overlook information that is available to you about 'difference' that you may encounter in another Tradition. However, you need to sharpen your awareness that identity is always in flux. I hope that the new connections and little disappointments you named a few minutes ago are indicators that you have experienced some personal change and are forming a new identity as an Ambassador. I hope that you have begun to experience a quickening within when you engage and learn from Others. If so, you have taken a big step away from seeing difference as a puzzle or problem to be solved. The next step is to focus on impact rather than intentions. *Distribute handout, Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*

The *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* seeks to help us make the anxiety of an encounter with Otherness optimal. It asks us to transform rather than focus on transforming the Other. There are four assumptions that undergird the process of transformation:

- 1) Shared meaning can't be assumed. We must discover, negotiate, or create meaning together.
- 2) Intercultural sensitivity can be developed: Skills & ideas can be learned and employed.
It is important to address the question: Whose responsibility is it to shift? Previous models asked the one with the least amount of power in a situation to do most of the adjusting and made them responsible for the learning of the powerful. This model shares responsibility and expects the powerful to be responsible partners.
- 3) Tools allow people to grow in their capacity to express commonalities and differences with increasing complexity. Difference is neither ignored nor glossed over. Commonalities are not minimized or inflated.
- 4) Human beings are creative and flexible enough to have the capacity to shift both behavior and mindset.

Those four assumptions dovetail nicely with the principles of this module and outline a positive path for continued personal development in your new identity as Ambassadors. They put your intentions to work.

(7 min) Now look at the bottom to see a diagram of Bennett's understanding of the multifaceted, multilayered nature of identity. Remembering that Ting-Toomey said that some things are primary and some situational, make some notes about things that are significant to you in each of those circles. Reflect on what has stayed the same and what has changed for you in this course of formation. *In pairs, discuss your notes on the diagram and the questions at the bottom of page.*

20 min: The Bennett Scale

In just a moment we will look at the Bennett Scale itself. On the handout you have, you see that the model describes a process with a common starting point that is essentially Monocultural, moves through a Multicultural stance, and finally arrives at an Intercultural stance. You may remember that in Session 2, we talked about a pattern of Orientations to Religious Otherness. As we look at Bennett's work, you may be reminded particularly of the Exclusivist and Pluralist orientations. The Bennett model has a different set of "stages" so it doesn't fit perfectly with the Orientation Styles but it shares some themes. Our goal is to learn not only what the stages are, but what moves someone from one stage to another and how folks in each stage may participate in a group. In some cases, we need to encourage a change in mindset but in other cases, a person needs an improved skillset. *Distribute the handout, The Bennett Scale.*

This Model is based on extended observation of intercultural actors. For this reason it is called a grounded theory—it starts with behavior on the ground not with theoretical concepts or frameworks. Changing knowledge, skills, and attitudes are understood to be a reflection of a change in the worldview. The model names six stages of worldview:

Denial- People living in *denial* don't notice other cultures. This may seem like a very confusing statement. How can you not notice people or behaviors are different from your own? The emphasis here is on "notice" or "pay attention to." In *denial*, I am sure that how I live is the only desirable way to live; I don't have to look further. If I even see you, you are a foreigner or an immigrant or a different race not a person with a rich culture worthy of interest and exploration. The temptation is to overwhelm someone in *denial* with evidence of difference but in order to move on from this stage, a person needs skills to differentiate between simple categories. For example, just recognizing that not all Latinos are Mexican may be a huge step. Or in religious terms, learning that there are different types of Baptists or Lutherans may actually be a breakthrough.

Polarization- People living in this stage are polarized in their understanding of the world as an us/them proposition. They also tend to be polarized about whether "us" or "them" are the good guys. If they adopt a *defensive* posture, then "us" is considered superior and safe and apologetics will be used to demonstrate this. "Clearly we have the best answers to life's questions and aren't we nice to share with everyone else." If instead they adopt a *reversal* posture, then "them" are idealized and emulated. This often presents as romanticizing the cultures of oppressed or indigenous peoples. While both of these demonstrate a rudimentary awareness of other cultures, that awareness is mostly stereotypical. The temptation is to try to correct stereotypes with more detailed information, but this reinforces a person's perception of polarizing difference. To move on from this stage, a person must begin to recognize commonality among cultures.

Minimization- It follows naturally that when a person begins to recognize commonality, it goes too far. Suddenly we're all essentially the same! People in this stage say things they intend to be kind but that make Others cringe quietly. For example, "Well, you know, everyone is a child of God," may be intended in a deferential way. However, for entire cultures that do not believe in God or do not believe in a personal God, this may be simply insensitive or overtly paternalistic. Or again, people in this stage may be aware of difference but clinging to the notion that when Others see our _____ (stuff, culture, Tradition, etc.) obviously they will want it. If a cross-cultural relationship does not work out with a *minimizing* person, s/he may say something like, "Well I thought they wanted to join us but they wanted to incorporate their style of music in our worship." The temptation with minimizers is to debunk the glosses that they apply to everything but this risks returning them to *polarization*. To move on from this stage, a person must become self-aware of culture. That is to say, the person must learn that the world is not experienced directly but viewed through a window; the window is a construction of my culture. It could also be called a filter and it is not universal. This stage is crucial because once it is negotiated, and a person is aware of his or her own culture, it is possible to fully imagine alternatives and accept them as both valid and desirable.

Acceptance- In this stage, people have just edged into an appreciation of difference. At this point they realize their own culture is one among many and they welcome the richness of humanity. People in this stage may collect phrases and customs from other cultures and even have some knowledge of a range of practices within another culture without understanding a full cultural view. For example, I know when it is appropriate to tip when I visit Germany, but this is because I read a guidebook not because I have a real grasp of German cultural values around money. People in this stage are also able to be sensitive to another culture's view of an issue without needing to like it or agree with it. However the challenge of this stage involves a person trying to sort out the appropriate balance of holding my values and commitments and respecting yours without relativizing them all. To move on from this stage, a person needs to develop a theory of culture that allows this balance.

Adaptation- People living in this stage begin to experience real empathy for other cultures and their power to shape their members. Bennett describes the skills of the stage as an extension of one's competence in

one's own culture—I do not assimilate or surrender my identity while in your culture, but I am able to respond naturally and appropriately to the situation in which I find myself. I have moved beyond head knowledge and collected artifacts into real engagement. My behaviors emerge from the genuine feeling for your culture; they are authentic not imitative or exploitive.

In organizations, *adaptation* encourages us to seek out ways to be and communicate inclusivity. For example, my Temple wants to be welcoming to people of all abilities but the building is very old. In a previous renovation, we built a ramp on the back entrance so as not to deface the building. We have now realized that may have shown a commitment to legal improvements. But it inadvertently communicated that differently abled people shouldn't be seen coming in our front door. We have grown in our understanding of inclusion and we are including differently abled people on our new renovation committee. It is possible we can't change the placement of the ramp but there are other things we can do— including making the front entrance only an emergency exit so that everyone comes in through the same door.

Integration- Bennett describes *integration* as, “the state in which one's experience of self is expanded to include movement in and out of different cultural worldviews.” People living in this stage are aware of their cultural formation in their home culture and their marginality in other cultures. They understand their home culture is like a default setting but it is insufficient for intercultural competence. People in their home culture may be confused by the behavior and attitudes of *integrated* people, but people in other cultures understand them as appreciative partners.

Where do you situate yourself on this scale? What stages have you been in and out of? Where are you right now? If you're not sure, look at the emotional state in the grey sections. If you're still not sure, make some notes and ask a participant that has been working with you through this formation.

Distribute the handout, Intercultural Conflict Styles. Dr. Mitchell Hammer is a colleague of Milton Bennett's. His specialty an intercultural communication is conflict. This usually isn't a favorite topic of religious people. Not to be funny, we tend to be polarized on the subject—we either want to avoid it at all costs or we cast everything as a spiritual battle. Hammer's view is that conflict is natural. Resolving it constructively results in personal and relational growth. He offers us some insight into conflict styles that complement the model we just reviewed.

The two axes in his model represent preferences for indirect to direct confrontation (vertical) and preferences for restrained or expressive emotions (horizontal.) The combination of preferences creates four styles of conflict engagement:

Discussion—direct and restrained

Engagement—direct and expressive

Dynamic—indirect and expressive (highest energy situation, everything's a potential battle)

Accommodation—indirect and restrained (lowest energy situation, go-along-and-get-along)

As with all matrices, each quadrant represents a range of intensities in the combinations. All the way up in the far right corner? You are very direct and very expressive. But notice the energy in a situation is all in what's not said. This is a graphic demonstration of how difficult it is to deal with things people aren't willing to put words on. Also, please remember these styles of engagement are a combination of personal preferences and cultural conditioning. (Advanced sociological studies reveal that there are still world regional preferences for styles. These are not significant for our work but it's interesting to know they exist.) It is worth taking a few moments to recognize where you would place yourself on the grid and how you respond to conflict. This can influence what you do as a facilitator.

15 min: Analysis: Who Are These People?

Distribute the handout, Who Are These People?

05 min: Assignment and Closing Prayer

Prayer by Rev. Frank O. Holmes

LEADER: Life does not call us merely to do over and over again what we have already done;

ALL: nor does it call us to act out, as puppets, parts already assigned to us.

LEADER: No. In the midst of a situation which is itself ever changing,

ALL: we are free to bring into realization new relationships of understanding and good-will, and new acts of courage.

(@3 min for group) LEADER: Share a brief thought on one of these questions:

- What new understanding surprised you in this session?
- What strengthened your goodwill in today's work?
- What kind of courage is required for you to engage different traditions, cultures, or conflicts?

Benediction by Eric Williams

LEADER: I invite you to raise a hand in blessing over each other and say these words with me:

Blessed is the path on which you travel.

Blessed is the body that carries you upon it.

Blessed is your heart that has heard the call.

Blessed is your mind that discerns the way.

Blessed is the gift that you will receive by going.

Truly blessed is the gift that you will become on the journey.

May you go forth in peace.

GATHERING PRAYER

Reflection by Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman

LEADER: The concern which I lay bare before God today is my need to be better:
I want to be better than I am in my most ordinary day-by-day contacts:

*ALL: With my friends—
With my family—
With my casual contacts—
With my business relations—
With my associates in work and play.*

LEADER: I will read these slowly and pause after each phrase, take time to reflect on whether there are things you want to let go of in relation to each category. After each pair I will invite you to make the response with, "We pray..."

I want to be better than I am in the responsibilities that are mine:
I am conscious of many petty resentments. (pause)
I am conscious of increasing hostility toward certain people. (pause)
We pray:

ALL: I want to be better than I am.

LEADER:

I am conscious of the effort to be pleasing for effect, not because it is a genuine feeling on my part. (pause)
I am conscious of a tendency to shift to other shoulders burdens that are clearly my own. (pause)
We pray:

ALL: I want to be better than I am.

LEADER:

I want to be better in the quality of my religious experience. (pause)
I want to develop an honest and clear prayer life. (pause)

ALL: I want to be better than I am.

LEADER:

I want to develop a sensitiveness to the will of God in my own life. (pause)
I want to develop a charitableness toward my fellows that is greater even than my most exaggerated pretensions. (pause)

*ALL: I want to be better than I am.
I lay bare this need and this desire before God in the quietness of this moment.*

Prayer by Rev. Frank O. Holmes

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ALL: nor does it call us to act out, as puppets, parts already assigned to us.

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*ALL: we are free to bring into realization new relationships of understanding and good-will,
and new acts of courage.*

ASSUMPTIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY
From the work of Dr. Milton J. Bennett

Four Assumptions:

- 1) Shared meaning can't be assumed: We must discover, negotiate, or create it together.
- 2) Intercultural sensitivity can be developed: Learn and use skills & ideas
Address the question: Whose responsibility is it to shift?
- 3) Tools allow people to grow in their capacity to express commonalities and differences
with increasing complexity
- 4) We have the capacity to shift both behavior and mindset

This Model Moves:

From Monocultural [I/we are the center]
to Multicultural [I/we appreciate difference from our center]
to Intercultural [We are all relating/shifting in a network].

This Model Says:

Diversity- 1st counts people; Inclusion explores how people count; Equity seeks outcomes that matter.
Intercultural groups prefer equity, which therefore requires a mindset/skillset to invite better relationships.

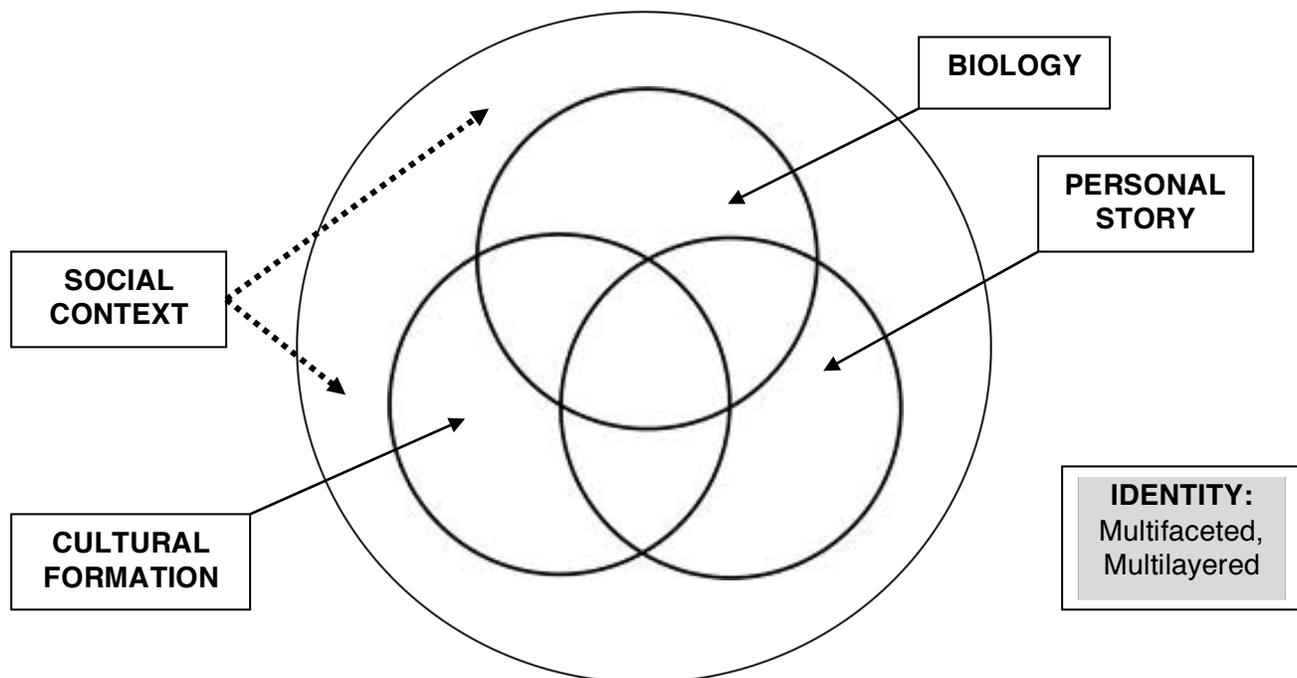
This Model Is Focused

ON learning/education: Information shapes both mindset and skillset
NOT directly on power issues

This Model Doesn't Work:

- With folks who think other cultures are inherently evil or wrong
- With folks who are narcissists or borderline personalities

*In fact, narcissists/borderline personalities will happily adopt the language but pervert the work—
mostly by trying to demonstrate they are being persecuted or ignored in their cultural difference*



How has preparing to be an Ambassador changed your personal story?

*What parts of your cultural or religious formation have you
altered, tweaked, or eliminated to become an Ambassador?*

Which of Bennett's four assumptions was easiest for you to adopt in this process? Why?

THE BENNETT SCALE: DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY
Dr. Milton J. Bennett

	Characteristics	Organizationally	Maintenance	Learning Edges
DENIAL	Can't see difference. May be privilege or benign intent or neglect. My culture is only reality.	One size fits all.	Tradition: Seek out only that which is familiar.	Real awareness of difference.
Emotions/Cognition: Indifference				
Transition: The person acquires an awareness of difference between cultures				
POLARIZATION Defense	<i>Us:</i> Superior/trustworthy <i>Them:</i> Inferior & untrustworthy	Division & inclusion are both problems (or obstacles.)	'Expert data' shows risk & costs of contact with others.	Finding commonality. Cooperative activities & team building.
Emotions/Cognition: Fear & anger				
Reversal	<i>Them:</i> Are better Romanticized images <i>Us:</i> Are less False allies & internalized oppression	Division & inclusion are both problems (or obstacles.)	'Expert data' negates stereotypes... with another form of stereotype!	Learn the difference between stereotype & generalization.
Emotions/Cognition: Shame				
Transition: Negative judgments are depolarized; the person is introduced to similarities between cultures.				
MINIMIZATION	Avoid stereotypes, don't denigrate others, "be nice." After all, "deep down we're all the same." Own cultural lens is reference point & is projected.	Conflict avoidance; emphasis on comfort & fit. Assimilation to dominant culture eases any tension.	'Expert data' supports accepted standards— Assumes that human interaction has an absolute pattern. How we communicate is how it's meant to be!	Waking up to cultural self-awareness. General knowledge of cultural frameworks (e.g. know that conflict styles & communication is different.)
Emotions/Cognition: Comfort & tolerance				
Transition: The person grasps the importance of intercultural difference.				
ACCEPTANCE	Recognize & see cultural patterns in context; even behavior is relativized. Begin to explore difference with non-evaluative stance. Have framework for cultures.	More difference means more creative ideas. Emphasis on curiosity & exploration but more 'head knowledge' than integration.	Community based assessments & research. Much eager questioning.	Practice! Learn to combine culturally specific info with practical skills. Can maintain own ethical commitments in face of relativity.
Emotions/Cognition: Curiosity				
Transition: Exploration and research into the other culture begins.				
ADAPTATION	Develop empathy & analysis while maintaining own ID/ ethics/ values. 'Behavioral code shifting' (i.e. an ability to shift perspectives & language across culture.)	Culturally responsive policies & practice. Adaptation to be effective in the moment. This may change as the population changes.	Awareness of equity. Engage Universal Design—design for greatest need.	Focus frame-shifting on big picture strategies & outcomes
Emotions/Cognition: Flexibility & tolerance of ambiguity				
Transition: The person develops empathy towards the other culture.				
INTEGRATION				

INTERCULTURAL CONFLICT STYLES

Dr. Mitchell Hammer

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Conflict naturally arises from difference in cultural norms and behaviors
Conflict styles are a mixture of personal preference and cultural norms

As we learn the content of different cultures & the principles/skills of intercultural work,
we both cause and become aware of micro-aggressions

Micro-aggressions are incongruities: *This* is contrary to what I'm learning. I am aware of them in the moment.
These can set intercultural work back quickly.

EXAMPLE: Shakira arrives at church for the first time

Trying to be culturally open someone says: Shakira, where did you come from? "I came from Minneapolis."

Oh, where did your family come from? "Utah."

Oh, but you must have foreign roots? "Yes, 200 years ago! What does that have to do with anything?"

Acceptance & Adaptation Can Only Begin

...When we realize that conflict will be part of it

...When character is understood not as "content of heart" but "results of behavior"

Adaptation Is Always a Choice

POWER QUESTIONS

Who is forced to shift? Who chooses to shift?

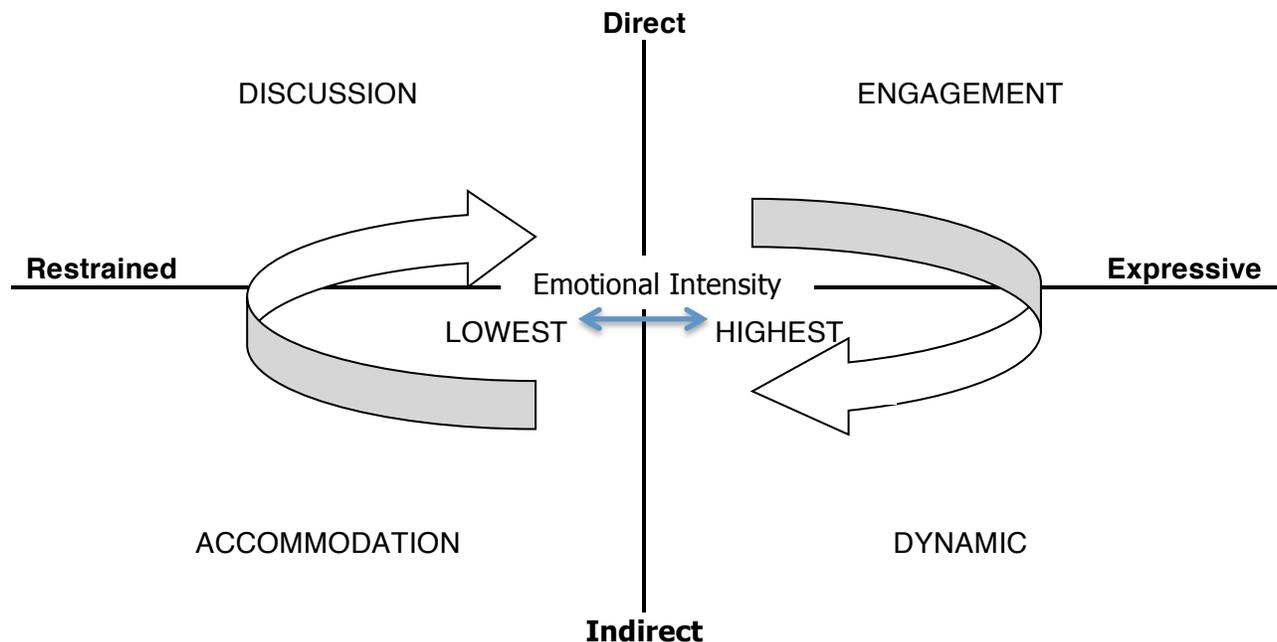
Dialog Begins to Make Sense

...When you can ask/offer culturally specific information & are both ready and able to receive it

...When you can engage systemic analysis and understand that impact (not intent) must be addressed

...When you understand that policy & practice are means of correcting oppression/exclusion

(NB: This is not salvation by process!)



WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

Here is a recap of the characters from the role-plays in the last two sessions.

- A) I am attuned to the cycles and seasons of the earth. In fact they are a spiritual resource and authority for me. I have become more and more concerned with environmental and ecological issues because of this.
- B) I have completed my Student phase and begun life as a Householder. I have been faithful to my yoga and I am doing well in providing for my family and being able to give to charity. However, I am very concerned that our society is out of whack and wealth and security are inappropriately emphasized.
- C) I am deeply committed to God's understanding of the radical equality of all human beings and to making an honest living. When I'm not at work or with my family and community, I am volunteering at the Disaster Relief Service Office.
- D) I experience life as sacramental. My God-given spiritual gifts are in discernment and organizing. I try to offer my skills to short-term or emergency projects.
- E) I began to understand how enlightenment could be possible when I discovered walking meditation. Now I do it in two ways—on a walking path in the woods and around my community. I have seen my neighborhood in a very different way because of this and I practice much more compassion for the residents around me.
- F) I plan my life around my prayer obligations. This keeps me aware that God is the center of my life and that God intends good for all the people around me. I get involved in projects that help people choose to do what's right and good for their families and our community.
- G) I believe I am a responsible agent helping heal the world. My primary goal is to hold a friendly and fruitful argument that allows us to consider our options for restoring or cutting services. My secondary goal is for us to make a solid ethical choice and act on it quickly.
- H) I realize that not even this devastating situation is permanent, but compassion demands that we work together to strengthen the community and address the pain it is in as well as plan for the gap in services.
- I) I believe the individual is the central concern of our work. My goal is to assure that everyone concerned maintains as much autonomy as possible while getting the basics that they need.
- J) I am here to serve God and neighbor. My goal for being here is to assure that we consider the poorest and weakest members (of our community) first in any of our decisions or planning.

Working in groups of three:

- **Identify** what Tradition you thought each character was representing and why you thought that.
- **Remember and discuss** how your co-participants played each character. Don't worry about whether any character [F or B, e.g.] may have been played in multiple ways—think of them as multiple characters [F1, F2, B1, B3, etc.] What stage do you think the portrayal demonstrated? What evidence do you have for that?
- **Remember and discuss** how you felt when playing your characters. On what emotional/cognitive boundaries were you acting? What Bennett "stage" did you think you were giving your characters?
- **In what ways** did the characters feel like a reflection of your own stage? In what ways did they challenge you?

ASSIGNMENT AND CLOSING PRAYER ASSIGNMENT

Choose and complete ONE of these tasks:

1) Read and reflect on *An Interview With a Peace Corps Volunteer: On Being Strange*, printed on the back of this page.

- As you have learned to communicate across boundaries, have you ever realized that others saw or perceived you as “strange?” What tipped you off? How did it influence your behavior?
- What is the difference between being a stranger and being strange?
- When is it hardest for you to let go of your notion of your culture being normative?

2) Interview someone of a different Tradition from your own using the Bennett Scale Characteristics (2nd column) as a guide.

- When you encounter a different Tradition, do you:
 - a) Only see your own Tradition?
 - b) Feel an inner tug of Us/Them?
 - c) Assume we’re all basically the same?
 - d) Ask lots of questions to learn about their worldview?
 - e) Try to adjust your language or behavior so as to smooth the conversation and not to be offensive?
- What tells you that is the proper way to respond to that Tradition? How long have you been this way?

3) Give 5 minutes of prayer/meditation daily to the well-being of a Tradition you don’t understand or that troubles you. Offer your prayer/meditation in a spirit of generous blessing for those who understand the world and practice differently from you. Use this mantra from Howard Thurman’s words to open and close your reflection: *I want to be better than I am. I lay bare this need and this desire [before God] in the quietness of this moment.*

CLOSING PRAYER

Prayer by Rev. Frank O. Holmes

LEADER: We began today with the words of Frank Holmes:

Life does not call us merely to do over and over again what we have already done;

ALL: nor does it call us to act out, as puppets, parts already assigned to us.

LEADER: No. In the midst of a situation which is itself ever changing,

ALL: we are free to bring into realization new relationships of understanding and good-will, and new acts of courage.

(@3 min for group) LEADER: Share a brief thought on one of these questions:

- What new understanding surprised you in this session?
- What strengthened your goodwill in today’s work?
- What kind of courage is required for you to engage different traditions, cultures, or conflicts?

Benediction by Eric Williams

LEADER: I invite you to raise a hand in blessing over each other and say these words with me:

ALL: Blessed is the path on which you travel.

Blessed is the body that carries you upon it.

Blessed is your heart that has heard the call.

Blessed is your mind that discerns the way.

Blessed is the gift that you will receive by going.

Truly blessed is the gift that you will become on the journey.

May you go forth in peace.

Building Bridges: A Peace Corps Classroom Guide to Cross-Cultural Understanding
Coverdell World Wise Schools
Interview With a Peace Corps Volunteer:
“On Being Viewed as Strange”

You can find the full text of this publication on the Web: www.peacecorps.gov/www/publications/culturematters/

Interviewer: When you went to the Dominican Republic, were there any surprises?

Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV): Not really. I mean, you're not prepared for every little thing, for all the particulars. But you know the people are going to be different, so you expect that. You may not know all the ways they're going to surprise you, but you do know you're going to be surprised when you go to a foreign culture.

Interviewer: How did the Dominicans react to you?

PCV: It's funny you should ask that, because that was surprising.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

PCV: Well, we thought we were prepared for going into a culture different from ours, but we weren't. After all, if you go in knowing these people aren't like you, then of course you also know that you aren't like them. But we had trouble believing that they found us strange sometimes. Doesn't make sense, does it?

Interviewer: So it's easy to accept that other people might be strange, but hard to believe that you could be perceived of as strange?

PCV: That's what I experienced, anyway.

Interviewer: I wonder why.

PCV: I think it has to be that while you are actually having the experience of their strangeness, they are the ones having the experience of yours. You never really experience yourself as strange, of course, so it just doesn't seem real. You know it must be real, but you have to take their word for it.

Interviewer: So you think it's hard for Peace Corps Volunteers to believe that the local people don't always understand them?

PCV: Despite all our training, I think we unconsciously tend to believe that we are the “normal” ones and the people in the other country are going to be the “strange” ones. Then, when you get to the other country, you realize that people see the world, themselves, and others in fundamentally different ways. The hard thing is learning to see things from their point of view.

Interviewer: Why is that hard?

PCV: Because before you go to another country, you tend to believe that your point of view is the only point of view—and that it's the right point of view. It's hard to realize that there may be two equally reasonable ways to view a situation, depending on your culture.